

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A sound retrieval apparatus for decoding sound data encoded in advance into a plurality of sound signals to be provided to a plurality of speakers for outputting sound in a three-dimensional sound field, said sound signals being respectively related to a plurality of channels; comprising:

decoding means for decoding said sound data into said sound signals respectively on said channels;

assigning means for assigning said channels to said speakers respectively ~~based on the channel assignment information about a specific association between said channels and said speakers;~~

output level adjusting means for adjusting the output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels;

information storing means for storing ~~said channel assignment information;~~ about a specific association between said channels and said speakers and output level information about a specific association between said channels and said output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels; and

control means for controlling said assigning means ~~based on said channel assignment information to ensure that said sound signals on said channels are provided to said respective speakers in association with said channels to have said assigning~~ means assigning said channels to said speakers respectively based on said channel

assignment information stored in said information storing means, and controlling said output level adjusting means to have said output level adjusting means adjust the output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels based on said output level information stored in said information storing means before said decoding means starts decoding said sound data into said sound signals respectively on said channels.

2. (Original) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claim 1, in which said control means is operative to judge whether there is sound data on said respective channels or not to cause said speakers in association with said channels having no sound data thereon to be inoperative.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claim 1 3, in which said output level adjusting means is operative to adjust respective said sound signals in equivalent ratio having said sound signals on said channels maintained in balance with one another.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Original) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claims 1 which further comprises selecting means for selecting said sound signals decoded by said decoding means, and summing means for summing said sound signals selected by said selecting means to output summed sound signals to respective said speakers.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claims 1 which further comprises display means for displaying the output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels.

10. (Currently Amended) A sound retrieval apparatus for decoding sound data encoded in advance into a plurality of sound signals to be provided to a plurality of speakers for outputting sound in a three-dimensional sound field, said sound signals being respectively related to a plurality of channels; comprising:

decoding means for decoding said sound data into said sound signals respectively on said channels;

assigning means for assigning said channels to said speakers respectively ~~in accordance with the identification data identifying a specific association between said channels and speakers;~~

output level adjusting means for adjusting the output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels;

information storing means for storing said channel assignment information about a specific association between said channels and said speakers and output level information about a specific association between said channels and said output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels;

detecting means for detecting identification data attached to said sound data, and obtain said channel assignment information and said output level information stored in said information storing means in accordance with said identification data; and

control means for controlling said assigning means ~~in accordance with said identification data to ensure that said sound signals on said channels are provided to said respective speakers in association with said channels~~ to have said assigning means assigning said channels to said speakers respectively based on said channel assignment information obtained by said detecting means, and controlling said output level adjusting means to have said output level adjusting means adjust the output levels of

said sound signals respectively on said channels based on said output level information obtained by said detecting means before said decoding means starts decoding said sound data into said sound signals respectively on said channels.

11. (Original) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claim 10, in which said control means is operative to judge whether there is sound data on said respective channels or not to cause said speakers in association with said channels having no sound data thereon to be inoperative.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claim ~~10~~ 12, in which said output level adjusting means is operative to adjust respective said sound signals in equivalent ratio having said sound signals on said channels maintained in balance with one another.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claims 10 which further comprises selecting means for selecting said sound signals decoded by said decoding means, and summing means for summing said sound signals selected by said selecting means to output summed sound signals to respective said speakers.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) A sound retrieval apparatus as set forth in claims 10 which further comprises display means for displaying the output levels of said sound signals

respectively on said channels.

19. (Currently Amended) A sound data recording apparatus for recording sound data encoded in advance from a plurality of sound signals to be provided to a plurality of speakers outputting sound in a three-dimensional sound field, said sound signals being respectively related to a plurality of channels; comprising:

inputting means for having inputted thereto ~~[[the]]~~ identification data identifying channel assignment information about a specific association between said channels and said speakers ~~inputted thereto~~ and output level information about a specific association between said channels and said output levels of said sound signals respectively on said channels; and

recording means for recording said identification data attached to said sound data in a manner that said identification data is read before said sound data is read.